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ABSTRACT

Methods and results are described of a study to determine if elementary classroom teachers in Colorado (1) have knowledge of the valuing education process; (2) have a preference for teaching values as opposed to values clarification, other valuing processes, or moral reasoning; and (3) can define the terms values and valuing. Ninety-two teachers participated in the survey, for which a special questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was designed to obtain information on teacher background, definition and preference of the terms values and valuing, agreement or disagreement with ten statements representing possible teaching strategies about values, and identification of significant researchers such as Kohlberg, Simon, Shaftel, and Olsen and Parsley. Results indicate that respondents have little knowledge of currently well-developed conceptual approaches to teaching valuing and of the names of theorists working in the area of values education with the exception of values clarification. However, 79% believe children should be taught values; 84% believe children should have knowledge of a valuing process; and 92% believe children should be helped to clarify values. One limitation of the study was the emphasis on memorized facts in the questionnaire. That aspect may not have allowed respondents to indicate knowledge of methodology in the field of values education. The questionnaire is included as an appendix. (Author/AV)

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ATTITUDES OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS TOWARD VALUING EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM

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SO 009872

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Attitudes of Elementary Teachers Toward
Valuing Education in the Classroom

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if elementary classroom teachers in Colorado have a philosophy toward teaching about values which guides their classroom teaching behaviors. To accomplish this purpose it was necessary to determine (1) if these elementary classroom teachers are cognizant of the recent emphasis being given valuing education (as evidenced by the increased attention paid to various conceptual approaches in professional journals and at the National Council for the Social Studies annual conventions, and by the proliferation of materials now available commercially), (2) if these selected teachers believe it is more important to develop one conceptual approach over any other when working with children in the classroom.

Background

Statistics are frequently being cited in the popular press which indicate an increase in crime rates, in unethical or questionable political practices, in immoral professional and business decisions, and in a breakdown in values-forming institutions. As a result educators are emphasizing a need for future citizens to be given help in the use of valuing processes and in forming effective decision-making techniques.

Olsen and Parsley's[1] study reported at the 1974 National Council for the Social Studies convention (a replication of Fraenkel's[2] 1972 study) indicated that nearly 50% of the elementary teachers participat-

ing "turned to authoritative means" to resolve a dilemma in which they themselves were involved. Olsen and Parsley found these results "dismaying" and concluded that no matter how carefully materials are designed for classroom use they "will be of little assistance if the teachers using those materials are unable to perceive (or understand) the viewpoints and/or positions of others".

Napier[3] examined whether or not elementary teachers could use a self-training aid to assess moral thought. His study was based on the assumption that it is necessary to assess moral stages before one can use instructional techniques for values education in the social studies curriculum. He further assumed that "if teachers cannot assess the stages of moral thought then the successful use of the approaches advocated ... for moral education is doubtful". He determined that the elementary teachers participating in his study could not learn to assess moral thought by using a self-training manual.

No reasons were suggested by Napier for the results obtained but he did indicate that educators should not suggest that teachers use materials that would require an assessment of the stages of moral thought.

Fraenkel[4] has stated that in his opinion, Kohlberg's theory places unrealistic demands on classroom teachers if they engage students in moral discussions because the theory requires the teacher be at least one step above the child's developmental level. Fraenkel continues:

> Kohlberg has stated that only ten percent of the population reaches Stages 5 or 6, (therefore) the laws of probability suggest that there are many teachers who themselves reason at lower stages, and who accordingly

> are likely to come in contact with students reasoning at stages higher than their own. ... How can a teacher who reasons at Stage 3, for example, be expected to present a Stage 5 argument to a Stage 4 student (so as to foster stage growth) if he or she cannot understand what such an argument is?

The questions then occur: what do teachers know of Kohlberg and moral stages? have teachers been taught to use valuing processes? if they have what approaches are they using when working with valuing education in their classrooms?

In an attempt to answer some of these questions it was decided to ask teachers to indicate their philosophies and the techniques they use in their classrooms when working with values or valuing.

PROCEDURES

Instrument Development

In examining the literature on valuing education (most of which is concerned with the opinions of the authors as to what ought to be, not with research) several approaches to values education and valuing processes were found. These centered around inculcation, clarification, process education, and moral development.

Olsen and Parsley[5] made two assertions in addition to the remarks already discussed that were of relevance to the formation of the survey instrument. The first stated that teachers believe students should engage in forming their values in an atmosphere of free inquiry. Secondly, they indicated that some disagreement was evident in defining a value and in planning a process for its use.

Using as a background the literature of opinion and the experimental

research available an instrument was designed (Appendix). Background information was requested to determine what factors were at work in the "education" of these teachers -- had they recently attended college or university classes? were they new or experienced teachers? did they belong to professional organizations? did they read professional literature?

The instrument further asked these subjects to define the terms values and valuing. Of course, as is pointed out by everyone writing on this topic, locating an agreed-upon definition for these terms is impossible. The literature was again examined and a definition for each term was agreed upon by four judges, knowledgeable about the literature on valuing, who were willing to read the definitions returned and to determine if these teachers had accurately defined the terms. (For definitions used see Appendix.)

The Ss were, also, asked to indicate which of the two terms, values or valuing, were more important to develop in the children with whom they worked.

Another aspect of the instrument was the compilation of ten statements representing possible positions a teacher might take to the teaching of values or teaching a valuing process to children. The teachers were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

An earlier survey sent to all AACTE institutions indicated that in general professors of social studies education courses for elementary teachers present all of the approaches mentioned above. Therefore, it was decided to ask the Ss if they would match the names of persons

quoted in the literature (or who have designed curriculum materials) with the phrases and terms identified as the works of these authors. The terms used to identify approaches and the individuals listed were selected because it was believed these names, approaches, and materials were those most frequently available to and used by elementary teachers. As an example instead of using the term "Inculcation" due to its having a somewhat negative connotation in the minds of many, a theory recognized as supporting the instilling of values was sought. Lasswell's Values Categories was selected since elementary texts on values published following Lasswell's (and others') work are located in and used in many schools.

Following the preliminary work of identifying topics and preparing an instrument a colleague[6] whose area of competency includes questionnaire development gave valuable assistance in completing the questionnaire. Final refinement was accomplished by asking a few elementary teachers to determine if each item could elicit the information desired.

Sample

One hundred and twenty-five elementary teachers in Colorado identified as knowledgeable and interested in the social studies by their principals agreed to take part in the survey and were sent a questionnaire. The selection of the subjects was accomplished by obtaining a complete list of Colorado elementary schools and the name of the principal of each school. Using the table of random numbers 300 principals were sent letters asking that they give a knowledgeable social studies

teacher in that school an enclosed letter and post card to return indicating a willingness to take part in the survey. Using this method of selection the survey is obviously limited because the 125 teachers who returned cards were interested in a questionnaire about values and valuing.

Ninety-three (74%) returned the instrument. One of these stated a lack of qualification and returned the materials unanswered but with a brief statement.[7] Ninety-two elementary classroom teachers participated in the survey. Of the ninety-three teachers who returned the questionnaire seventeen were male, seventy-one were female (as determined by their given names) and five did not sign their names. Forty-five of these Ss taught at the primary level and forty-six at the intermediate level (one was the principal); forty-two had either a master's degree or more than enough hours to equal a master's degree while fifty had a bachelor's degree and fewer hours; twenty-six had taught fewer than five years, twenty-six had taught six to ten years, and thirty-nine had taught more than eleven years (one did not answer this item). All but two had attended college classes in the last three years. Figure I presents this background information graphically.

RESULTS

Results of Defining Terms

In evaluating the definitions of the words values and valuing four judges were selected as indicated. If three of the four agreed the definition was accepted as either correct or incorrect. Three of

BACKGROUND INFORMATION OF ELEMENTARY TEACHERS
RETURNING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

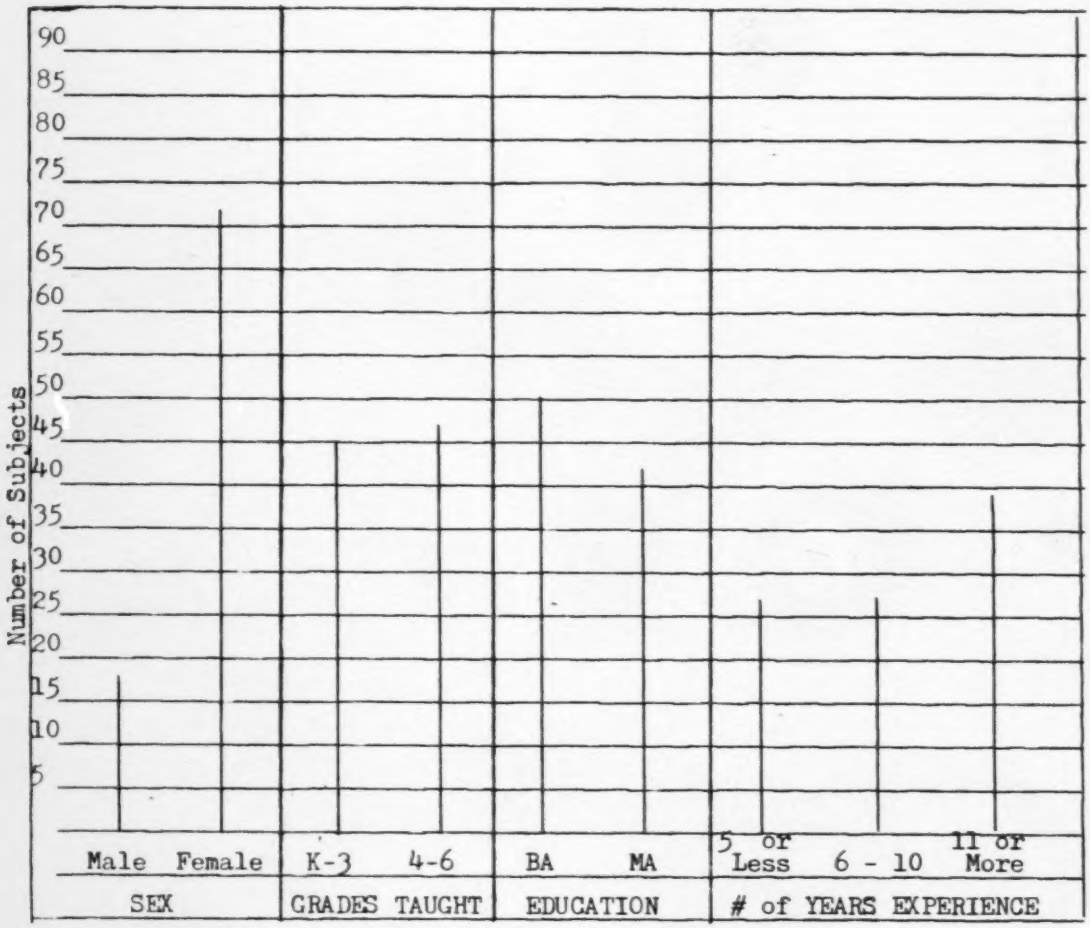

FIGURE I

the ninety-two teachers responding did not attempt to define either term. In accordance with the judges findings ten individuals (11%) incorrectly defined both terms while thirty-four (37%) correctly defined both terms. These thirty-four are included in the following breakdown of correct definitions of each term. Sixty-four (70%) of the ninety-two Ss were able to define the word values correctly. The judges could not agree on nine (10%) of the definitions given.

Defining the term valuing was more difficult. In addition to the three Ss who did not define either term two more, for a total of five, did not attempt to define valuing. There was no agreement by the judges on thirteen of the valuing definitions. However, the judges determined that 45% of the eighty-seven teachers had defined the term valuing correctly.

Of the thirty-four Ss who correctly defined both terms only nineteen indicated which of the two terms they believed was more important. Sixteen of the nineteen stated that a valuing process was more important to develop in elementary children.

Thirty of the Ss defined values correctly and valuing incorrectly and of these only sixteen indicated which term was more important. Nine of these sixteen said values was more important, six said valuing was more important and one person said the terms were equally important to develop with children.

Results of Position Statements

Table I shows the results of the total group responses to the ten position statements given in the instrument. The responders were asked

AGREEMENT WITH POSITION STATEMENTS

(N=92)

STATEMENTS	AGREE		UNDECIDED		DISAGREE		DID NOT CHECK	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1. Values should be taught to school children	73	.79	5	.05	12	.13	2	.02
2. A valuing process should be taught ...	78	.84	7	.08	4	.04	3	.03
3. Children need to be taught to clarify their values ...	85	.92	5	.05	2	.02	0	
4. Values cannot be taught	11	.12	10	.11	71	.77	0	--
5. Everybody "teaches" values	83	.90	7	.08	2	.02	0	--
6. Children need to be instructed in values of interest to the community.	56	.61	13	.14	20	.22	3	.03
7. Children don't need to be taught values -- the important ones will be "caught" ...	8	.09	9	.10	74	.81	1	.01
8. A teacher should be a "model" of values for the children in the community	65	.72	15	.16	10	.11	2	.02
9. Values/valuing should not be taught at all to public school children	7	.08	6	.07	76	.83	3	.03
10. Children need to be taught Law-Related educational units	64	.71	25	.27	1	.01	2	.02

TABLE I

to Agree, Disagree or indicate if Undecided. As can be seen in the Table a large number of these elementary teachers believed values should be taught but, also, wanted children to learn to clarify values and to be taught a valuing process.

In agreeing or disagreeing with the position statements none of the background factors were found to be related to the results. This was true for length of teaching, amount or recency of education, membership in or involvement in professional organizations, regular reading of professional journals, sex, or the ability to define the terms correctly.

Identification of Names and Approaches

The valuing education terms and names of authors appeared to be unknown, generally, to these Ss with the exception of the term Values Clarification. Values Clarification could be identified with at least one of the people publishing materials by forty-five of the Ss. Thirteen of these named only Sidney Simon[8] and eleven others identified Fannie Shaftel[9]. Figure II shows the knowledge of conceptual approaches as indicated by correctly identifying a person recognized as an authority in working with that approach.

DISCUSSION

Perhaps the most obvious conclusion to be drawn from this survey is that elementary teachers in Colorado are authoritarian while at the same time interested in teaching a valuing process. This seems to be what the Fraenkel[10] and Olsen and Parsley[11] studies were reflecting.

PERCENT ELEMENTARY TEACHERS IDENTIFYING
APPROACH AND AUTHORITY

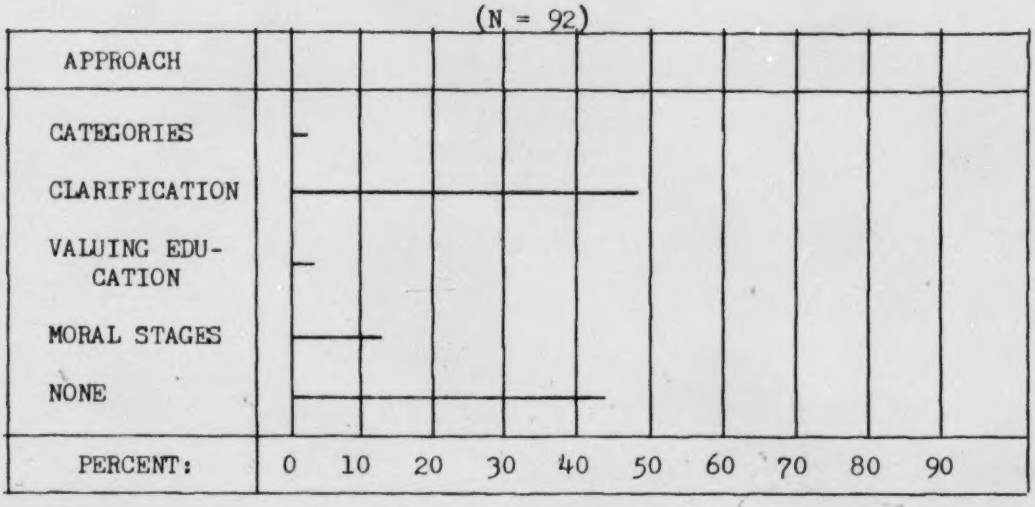

FIGURE II

These Colorado teachers advocate both positions.

Some individuals working with valuing education today believe this kind of behavior is impossible and the response is an indication that the Ss were without knowledge of the subject. That is, no one who understands the issues could follow both paths. That belief might have been supported by the finding of this survey that sixteen of the nineteen Ss who correctly defined both values and valuing believed it more important to develop valuing with children than to teach values. Unfortunately, nineteen is not a very significant number representing only 21% of the total number of Ss returning the instrument. It is, therefore, with recognition of this limitation that the following is con-

sidered. Thirty-four people, according to the judges, know enough about this topic to define both terms correctly -- those thirty-four represent 37% of the total group. It is possible to believe that 37% of elementary teachers are truly informed and aware of the differences between teaching values and teaching valuing and of these 84% believe that helping children to learn valuing processes is more important than teaching values. However, these data pale when it is discovered that taken with the rest of the information gathered these individuals differ little from the rest of the sample for they, too, agreed with the position statements which stated it is important for children to be taught values, valuing processes, and values clarification.

There is then a chance that people suggesting these Ss were unaware or they could not hold these contradictory positions are themselves not fully aware of the world of the classroom teacher. During the Bicentennial many teachers expressed a desire to instill in young people a pride in the country and in the democratic process. That view indicates a desire to inculcate values and tends to be the philosophy asked of teachers by the communities in which they teach. At the same time many teachers believe that today's adults can only guess at the decisions tomorrow's adults will be asked to make and to prepare these children to make decisions intelligently they must be given valuing processes. It seems that advocating both positions is not necessarily the result of confusion but an attempt to be a "good" teacher. An environment of open inquiry may not be available but the environment may be as open as these teachers feel they can permit.

One other interpretation needs to be discussed and that is whether or not the instrument actually provided an opportunity for the responders to indicate a knowledge of conceptual approaches to the teaching of values or valuing. The instrument was designed for ease in answering and, therefore, assessed the ability to recognize the names of the authors or advocates of the various theories and approaches. The training needed to memorize facts has not been a high priority task recently and the inability to recall names may not indicate a lack of knowledge of methodology. Of course, a different interpretation could be true -- many elementary teachers do not know what is meant by the terms used. Further research among elementary teachers will be needed to provide the answer.

REFERENCES

1. Olsen, Henry D. and James F. Parsley, Jr. "Resolution of Value Conflicts by Classroom Teachers." A paper presented at the National Council for the Social Studies annual meeting, Chicago, 1974.

2. Fraenkel, Jack R. "Teacher Approaches to the Resolution of Value Conflicts." A paper presented at the National Council for the Social Studies annual meeting, Boston, 1972.

3. Napier, John D. "The Ability of Elementary School Teachers to Assess Moral Thought." A paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, 1976.

4. Fraenkel, Jack R. "The Kohlberg Bandwagon:.Some Reservations." SOCIAL EDUCATION, April, 1976, p. 218.

5. Olsen and Parsley, op. cit.

6. Slaichert, William, Professor of Education, University of Denver.

7. The statement made by this teacher is of some interest: "There have been several Inservice meetings on Value Education at (my school) but I have read only excerpts from some of the authors' books. ... I do not feel qualified in answering this questionnaire."

8. Simon, Sidney, et al. VALUES CLARIFICATION: A HANDBOOK OF PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS. New York, New York: Hart, 1972.

9. Shaftel, Fannie, and George Shaftel. ROLE PLAYING FOR SOCIAL VALUES. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967.

10. Fraenkel, Jack R. "Teacher Approaches to the Resolution of Value Conflicts." op. cit.

11. Olsen and Parsley. op. cit.

APPENDIX

PART I

BASIC INFORMATION

Name: _____

Total number of years you have taught, including 1975-76: _____

What grade(s) do you teach? (Circle all that apply.)

K 1 2 3 4 5 6

Name and address of College/University from which you obtained your Bachelor's Degree: _____

City: _____ State: _____

If you obtained your teaching certificate at another time or place than above please indicate the name and address of that institution: _____

_____

City: _____ State: _____

Other post-graduate education:

Degree(s) ☐ M.A. or M.S. Year: _____

☐ PH.D. or Ed.D Year: _____

And/or number of hours above the Bachelor's: _____

Date of most recent education hours? _____

Do you belong to any professional education organization(s)? (Circle) YES NO

If YES, which organization(s)? _____

_____

_____

Are you active in professional organization(s)? (Circle one)

No Involvement Some Involvement Much Involvement

Do you regularly read educational materials pertaining to the social studies? (i.e. Journals, newsletters, etc.) (Circle one) YES NO

PART II

SURVEY OF VALUES/VALUING PROCESSES

Below are two terms. Please define the terms in your own words. If you find that one term is a synonym for the other simply write the word SYNONYM on the line following the second term.

VALUES: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

VALUING: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If you find that it is more important to develop one of the above more than the other term when working with children in the classroom, CIRCLE the term you believe is the more important.

Read the following statements. If you AGREE with the statement circle the letter A following the statement. If you DISAGREE circle the letter D. If you don't know or are UNDECIDED circle the U. Some of these statements are contradictory to others. Please answer every statement -- they are not intended to be trick statements. An attempt is being made to determine exactly how teachers feel about each. Feel free to add comments.

	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE
1. Values should be taught to public school children.	A	U	D
2. A valuing process should be taught to public school children.	A	U	D
3. Children need to be taught to clarify their values.	A	U	D
4. Values cannot be taught.	A	U	D
5. Everybody "teaches" values to some extent.	A	U	D
6. Children need to be instructed in those values the community wants continued from one generation to another.	A	U	D
7. Elementary children don't need to be taught values -- the important values will be "caught" from the adults who surround them.	A	U	D
8. A teacher should be a "model" of values for the children in his/her community.	A	U	D
9. Values/valuing should not be taught at all to public school children.	A	U	D
10. Elementary children need to be taught Law-Related educational units.	A	U	D

If one (or more) of the above statements closely approximates your own philosophy circle the number of the item(s).

Below, in Column A, are phrases describing the work, theory, or technique of authors writing in the area of values/valuing. In Column B are the names of some authors. Put the number found in front of the name from Column B on the line in front of the phrase in Column A which describes the work of the author. There are more names than techniques -- you may place more than one number on a line or you may find that none of the names matches a technique. If you have never heard of a person or of a technique put "N" in front of the name or technique.

A	B
_____Moral Stages	1. Fraenkel, Jack
_____Values Clarification	2. Harmin, Merrill
_____Role-Playing for Social Values	3. Howe, Leland W.
_____Values Categories	4. Kirschenbaum, Howard
_____Values Education	5. Kohlberg, Lawrence
	6. Lasswell, Harold D.
	7. Raths, Louis
	8. Shaftel, Fannie
	9. Simon, Sidney

☐ Check here if you would be willing to have Dr. Metsker observe in your classroom sometime during the 1976-77 school year.

☐ Check here if you would be willing to have Dr. Metsker interview you during the 1976-77 school year.

Checking either of the above indicates an interest not a commitment. Purpose, objectives, and methodology will be thoroughly discussed with those interested.

In your classroom do you use any commercially prepared materials dealing with values/valuing education? (Texts, games, kits, films) (Circle one) YES NO

If you do would you share the information of which materials you use by noting below the author's name, or the name of the kit, or the name of the publisher -- just some notation to identify the material?

DEFINITIONS USED BY JUDGES

VALUES: Ideas, concepts, phenomenon, beliefs, criteria, behaviors, standards, or aspects of a culture for determining that which is good or bad, or of worth, or of beauty. The definition may be in terms of an individual or of a society.

NOT A DEFINITION:

Lists of concepts people might value,

Descriptions of methodology (how a teacher should teach values).

VALUING: The process of deciding what is of worth or of beauty. The act of determining what is of value. Judging or making a judgment would be considered part of the process.